

but to the clear light
of her own natural beauty, thanking her again & again.

And I did not apologize for living
as a Kept Woman
who wears the huge indestructable diamond of poetry
in place of the bouquet of sweetheart roses
my heart might have been
had I not surrendered
to vulnerability.

And I knew I talked only to myself.
My mother rode in some jitney, practically
under the ocean, pushed by a faithful
servant
going toward some safe hotel of the senses.

When she had drowned I noticed
my father had removed
that plain gold (14K) band
but had forgotten to instruct the practical
nurse he'd hired
to trim her fingernails which were monstrously long
& sharp.

This poem is for all women who speak
kabbalistic language to themselves & to their
daughters : may you learn to shout,
weep,moan,sing & celebrate
the truth / we are Kept Women

only if we choose to be. The real
issue is not poetry : it is human

Survival.

-- Barbara Moraff

Strafford VT

TWO OF A KIND

Tennessee Williams invited Carson McCullers
To his house once
To work on a dramatization.

They worked at opposite ends of a long table
Passing a bottle of whiskey
Back and forth between them.